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POSITIVE DOCTRINES IN COLLECTIVE CRIMES

especially in those undergoing collective confinement, the paranoid form in those in solitude. As exciting causes, trial, the shock of some bad news, punishment, etc., seem sometimes to play a role. In general the prognosis of these disturbances is not unfavorable, though the time needed for recovery varies very greatly."—Summary from the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, July, 1912.

C. L. ALLEN, Los Angeles.

Sighele on Adulteration of the Positive Doctrines in Collective Crimes.—In the February issue of *La Scuola Positiva* there is a very interesting note by Scipio Sighele on "Adulteration of the Positive Doctrines in Collective Crimes." Collective crimes are crimes committed by mobs or by people in groups. The author begins by explaining that a Russian writer in 1909 attacked his position upon the subject of collective crime. The Russian writer believes that crimes committed by individuals of a mob should be more severely punished. It is the contention of Sighele in his book upon the subject, and in this note, that the person who commits crime under the influence of the exciting causes of mob action should be treated more leniently because the actors are involved in a complex of external suggestion rather than driven to crime by their own wills. Mob-criminals should more properly be called improvised delinquents. They do not premeditate crime; neither do they meditate upon it. They are simply drawn into the whirlpool often against their own wills, and almost always with their wills unconcerned, by the strong forces of imitation. If the criminal were perverse, then it would be advisable for society to fear him and to punish him severely. But surely, mob-criminals are not perverse, nor are they to be feared by society. A child, a man of the people, a curious individual in a crowd, in a demonstration in the Plaza has suggested to him by the environment something which causes him to shout, to throw a stone, to strike somebody with a cane or with a knife—these persons are not to be held responsible for their acts in exactly the same way in which they would be under conditions of more isolation and tranquillity, since they are neither morally abandoned nor habitual criminals; they yield to the impulse which urges from without, and when they have come to themselves again they deplore what they have done.

The author says that he would not devote so much time to battering down such weak opposition to his ideas, were it not for the fact that the Appellate court in Trapani very recently decided in conformity with the ideas of the opposition, thus running counter to a long series of decisions which upheld and applied the doctrines of the author. On the first of July, 1911, the Prefect of Trapani ordered an individual to be transported to the hospital for treatment because his wife had died a few days before of a contagious disease. The city doctor, accompanied by the carabinieri, came to the home of this individual to execute the orders of the prefect. There he found a large crowd which opposed with shouts and threats the execution of the order. There was some disturbance, and some stones were thrown. Finally the carabinieri overcame the superstitious multitude and the individual was carried to the hospital. Fifteen people were arrested, almost all about the age of twenty, and some under the age of twenty, including a boy of fourteen years and one of thirteen. These persons were taken to the court and charged with violence, assault and resistance to public officials.

PSYCHOLOGY IN A JUVENILE COURT

This was a typical case of the delinquent mob; that is, of improvised crime decided by ignorance and superstition which did not allow the crowd to understand the reason for the order of the Prefect, which was based upon the foundations of hygiene and legitimate care for the public health. It seems to the author that this was a case where this ignorance and this superstition ought to have excused in part, at least, the attitude of the mob. The mob was not composed of bad men at heart. They were deluded people. Instead of being sentenced to jail they ought to have been given an education which would have convinced and persuaded them of their mistake. They were not even violent people, because even if they did descend to the throwing of stones, they did not reach the point of going to excess—a point which they could very easily have reached considering their number and the excitement of the moment; everything ended in a short time and no harm was done except some slight bruises. The Appellate court, instead of treating the delinquents scientifically, took the position that the fact that the individuals were acting as members of a crowd made their crime the more grave, and in coming to this opinion they misinterpreted the doctrines of the Positive school and indeed, stood upon these doctrines to uphold their own opinion. All the old arguments were brought up again—the old arguments that have been overturned, over and over again, and that had, the author had supposed, been finally crushed out of existence by the series of decisions contrary to this decision.

Sighele believes that the light sentence which would have been the result of taking into account the ignorance and the prejudice of the mob would not have favored the individuals illegitimately and would not thus have incited other people to crime of the same kind, but would rather have been much more beneficial than the severe sentence. Prejudice and ignorance are not conquered, but rather are they made more sharp and bitter by years or months in prison. The judges should have taken into consideration, in judging the indicted people who were almost all very young, that not a little portion of responsibility falls upon society, which leaves the multitudes in a deplorable intellectual state.

R. F.

Psychology in a Juvenile Court.—“Believing that if the state is to be intelligent in its treatment of boys and girls who are going wrong it must procure accurate analyses of the social, mental, and physical factors contributing to each child’s waywardness, the Juvenile court of Seattle, Washington, has added to itself a department of research. What was accomplished during its first six months is told by Dr. Lilburn Merrill, director of the department. It is interesting to note by way of preface that A. W. Frater, judge of the court, regards the department as one of his most valuable and practical aids in administering delinquency cases. He writes:

“It is our purpose (in the new department), so far as possible, to have every delinquent child, who may be brought into court, first placed under observation in this department. When possible or convenient, the examination is made in the presence of his parent or guardian. Here he is studied sympathetically from the viewpoint of the physician and psychologist who have specialized in the care of this class of children, and a written report of the social, physical and mental factors which may have contributed to the child’s delinquency is presented to us when the case comes on for hearing. This report